**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-36 (canceled).

37. (Previously presented) A method for artificially ageing a catalyst device for use on a catalyst test bench for converting exhaust gases comprising at least one constituent from the group consisting of C-, HC- and $NO_x$-containing constituents, in which method hot ageing gas which comprises at least one constituent from the group consisting of C-, HC- and $NO_x$-containing constituents is allowed for flow through the catalyst device, the hot ageing gas being passed through a catalyst device which is for use on a catalyst test bench and is suitable for the conversion of exhaust gases comprising C-, HC- and/or $NO_x$-containing constituents, characterized in that gas which emerges from the catalyst device is partially admixed with the ageing gas to be fed to the catalyst device, in order to be recirculated.

38. (Currently amended) The method of claim 37, characterized in that the host ageing gas used is an exhaust gas generated by combustion of a C-containing fuel.

39. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 38, characterized in that the hot exhaust gas is generated in a burner by combustion with combustion air.

40. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 38, characterized in that the hot exhaust gas is generated in a gas turbine.

41. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that the hot ageing gas is passed through the catalyst device by means of a blower.

42. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that the ageing gas is introduced into the catalyst device at a temperature of > 250°C.

43. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 42, characterized in that the ageing gas is introduced into the catalyst device at a temperature of > 700°C.

44. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 43, characterized in that the ageing gas is introduced into the catalyst device at a temperature of from approximately 1000°C to approximately 1250°C.

45. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 39, characterized in that the hot exhaust gas is generated during combustion operation with lambda > 1.

46. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 45, characterized in that the hot exhaust gas is generated during combustion operation with lambda > 1.5.

47. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 38, characterized in that the fuel used is a combustible C-containing fluid selected from the group consisting of gaseous and liquid fluids.

48. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 47, characterized in that the fuel used is low sulfur fuel.

49. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 48, characterized in that a fuel with a sulfur content of ~~>~~ ≤10 ppm is used.

50. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 49, characterized in that a fuel with a sulfur content of ~~>~~ ≤ 5 ppm is used.

51. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 38, characterized in that the ratio of fuel to combustion air is varied in predetermined cycles.

52. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 51, characterized in that the catalyst device is subjected to different ageing gas compositions and ageing gas temperatures corresponding to a combined load cycle.

53. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 52, characterized in that the catalyst device is subjected to load corresponding to mixed vehicle operation.

54. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that the catalyst device is subjected a number of times, in each case after an ageing step, to a diagnosis, in which the amplitude ratio of a post-cat sensor as a measure of the oxygen storage capacity is compared with a model, the model being matched to a relevant limit catalyst and a limit value being determined from the amplitude ratio between the current signal of the post-cat sensor compared to the modeled post-cat sensor signal, the post-cat sensor signal being taken as a measure of the oxygen storage capacity of the catalyst device.

55. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that the ageing gas fed to the catalyst device is cooled.

56. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 55, characterized in that the ageing gas fed to the catalyst device is cooled by gas emerging from the catalyst device.

57. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 56, characterized in that gas emerging from the catalyst device is admixed in cooled form with the ageing gas that is to be fed to the catalyst device.

58. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that the temperature of the ageing gas fed to the catalyst device is varied by cooling independently of the setting of lambda during generation of the ageing gas.

59. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that at least one component is admixed to the hot ageing gas in order to set a defined composition of the ageing gas.

60. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 59, characterized in that at least one component selected from the group consisting of C- and HC-containing gas constituents is admixed.

61. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that the ageing gas is generated synthetically.

62. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that a catalyst device selected from the group consisting of a 3-way catalyst, an $NO_x$ catalyst, an oxidation catalyst, a reformer for reducing agent and a reformer for fuel cells is aged using the ageing gas.

63. (Previously presented) An apparatus for artificially ageing a catalyst device for use on a catalyst test bench for converting exhaust gases comprising at least one constituent from the group consisting of C-, HC- and $NO_x$-containing constituents, in which a device for generating a hot ageing gas and a device for passing the host ageing gas through the catalyst device are provided, characterized in that a device for partial recirculation of gas emerging from the catalyst device to the ageing gas is provided.

64. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 63, characterized in that the device for generating a hot ageing gas is a device for combustion of a C-containing fuel with combustion air.

65. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 64, characterized in that the device for passing the hot ageing gas through the catalyst device is a hot-air blower.

66. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 64, characterized in that the device for passing the hot ageing gas through the catalyst device is a suction jet pump.

67. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 63, characterized in that a temperature sensor is provided for measuring the temperature of the ageing gas that is to be fed to the catalyst device.

68. (Previously presented) The apparatus as calmed in claim 67, characterized in that a device for controlling the temperature of the ageing gas that is to be fed to the catalyst device is provided.

69. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 63, characterized in that a device for cooling the ageing gas that is to be fed to the catalyst device is provided.

70. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 69, characterized in that the device for cooling the ageing gas that is to be fed to the catalyst device comprises a device for cooling recirculated gas emerging from the catalyst device.

71. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 63, characterized in that an oxygen sensor is provided at the outlet of the catalyst device for the purpose of monitoring the catalyst device.

72. (Previously presented) The apparatus as claimed in claim 63, characterized in that an oxygen sensor is provided for the purpose of monitoring the ageing gas that is to be fed to the catalyst device.